



Office of Indian Education

Request

The Arizona Department of Education (the Department) requests \$400,000 annually, beginning in FY18, for 4.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, to support the Office of Indian Education and fulfill its statutory mandates.

Background

A.R.S. § 15-244, requires the Department to establish an Office of Indian Education (OIE) which, in addition to other duties, must:

- “Provide technical assistance to schools and Indian nations to develop culturally appropriate curricula and instructional materials”;
- “...[P]rovide technical assistance to schools and Indian nations to meet the educational needs of native American pupils”; and
- “Provide technical assistance to schools and Indian nations in the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of curricula that are culturally relevant and aligned to state standards.”
- “...[S]ubmit an annual statewide native American education status report to all Indian nations in this state.”

Justification

Arizona is home to 22 native tribes and nations, numbering approximately 300,000 people, and is the third-largest native population in the United States, with communities spread throughout nearly 113,998 square miles. Almost 16% of the nation’s Native American student population attends an Arizona public school¹. Native American students comprise nearly 5% of the total Arizona student population with a large percentage of students (78%) attending schools on rural tribal lands. With most tribal land located hours away from Maricopa County, it is nearly impossible for the sole OIE FTE to provide technical support to high-density native populations.

Native American students are in need of additional support that the Department has been unable to provide in the past. Arizona’s Native American students in low density schools have the lowest graduation rate and the second lowest graduation rate in high density schools out of other races and ethnicities². Native Americans also have the lowest reading proficiency scores out of other races and ethnicities in both high and low density schools³. Native American children are falling behind; they are not growing educationally at the same average rate as their peers. Native American children are sitting next to their peers in the same classes and not achieving the same outcomes, because they face other challenges that must be addressed by staff that understand their unique needs. Even more disconcerting is the fact that, nationwide, Native American teens and young adults kill themselves at more than double the rate of other young Americans and have the highest suicide rate of any population group in the United States⁴.

The Department does not receive support for the OIE from the general fund, and the OIE, in order to meet its statutory mandate, is only staffed by one single individual. The Department believes that by appropriating these requested funds and affording it the ability to “hire appropriate personnel,” as A.R.S. § 15-244 requires, these historically underserved students will finally be given a fair chance to succeed.

¹ http://www.azed.gov/indian-education/files/2013/04/native_american_education_2012-official.pdf

² A high-density school is defined as a school that enrolled at least 25% Native American students. Schools with a Native American enrollment of less than 25% are labeled low-density schools.

³ Id.

⁴ <http://www.ncai.org/about-tribes/demographics>



Operation Cost

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| FTEs: | 4.0 FTE |
| PERSONAL SERVICES: | \$266,300 |
| ERE: | \$93,200 |
| PROFESSIONAL & OUTSIDE SERVICES: | \$3,000 |
| TRAVEL: | \$10,000 |
| OPERATING: | \$27,500 |
| DEVELOPMENT COSTS: | \$0 |
| TOTAL: | \$400,000 |